

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 27 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is an independent process claim with claims 2 through 17 depending therefrom. Claim 18 is an independent apparatus claim with claims 19 through 25 depending therefrom. Claims 26 and 27 are drawn to a nonwoven web produced by the process of claims 1 and 8, respectively.

Claims 1 through 27 are provisionally rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in view of claims 1 through 15 of co-pending Application No. 10/325,140. The claims are also provisionally rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in view of claims 1 through 26 of co-pending Application No. 10/687,006. A properly executed Terminal Disclaimer will be prepared to obviate the double patenting rejection in view of the two cited co-pending applications and will be submitted in due course upon indication that the claims have been otherwise allowed.

Claims 1 through 27 stand rejected under § 102(e) in view of Ferencz '101. Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims patentably distinguish over Ferencz '101, as discussed below.

Independent claim 1 is drawn to a process for forming a nonwoven web, and calls for providing a source of fibers and subjecting the fibers to an electrostatic charge by passing the fibers through an electrostatic unit. The electrostatic unit has a first side and a second side opposed to each other with an array of protrusions on both the first side and the second of the electrostatic unit. As described in detail throughout the specification, it is the array of protrusions that creates the electrostatic charge in the

electrostatic unit. Once it is subjected to the electrostatic charge, the fibers are collected on a forming surface to form a nonwoven web. Similarly, claim 18 is drawn to an apparatus for forming a nonwoven web and comprises a source of fibers, and a device for applying an electrostatic charge to the fibers. The charging device includes a first side and a second side opposed to each other, wherein an array of protrusions are on the first side and the second side of the electrostatic unit. A forming surface is called for for collecting the fibers after they have been charged. As described in the specification, an electrostatic unit utilizing an array of protrusions provides distinct advantages, including the ability to create higher currents at a given applied voltage, the ability to alternate the current from one side of the electrostatic unit to the other, and the ability to set the protrusions within a cavity to prevent fouling without reducing the size of the passage of the electrostatic unit. Other advantages may also be realized.

Ferencz '101 does not anticipate either of claims 1 or 18 for at least the reason that it does not disclose of a charging unit utilizing an array of protrusions on both the first side and the second side of the unit. Referring to Figs. 2 and 4 of the reference, the electrostatic charging unit according to Ferencz '101 is the charging member 34 installed in the side plate 22 such that it is substantially flush with the side plate interior surface 36. The charging member 34 is connected to a voltage source 38, and the opposite side plate 20 is grounded. The charging member 34 is described at column 6, lines 4 through 13 as preferably comprising a plurality of individual corona charging pins 40 arranged in an offset grid. However, the opposite side wall 20 (the grounded member) does not include any array of pins, protrusions, or other structure that can in

any way be interpreted as a protrusion. The side walls 20 and 22 are described as "substantially flat" (see column 5, lines 46 through 47).

Accordingly, since Ferencz '101 does not disclose an electrostatic charging unit having a first side and a second opposite side with an array of protrusions on each of the first and second side, the reference cannot anticipate independent claims 1 or 18.

Thus, the applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 18 are allowable over Ferencz '101. The remaining claims only further patentably define the invention of their respective independent claims and are thus allowable for at least the reasons claims 1 and 18 are allowable.

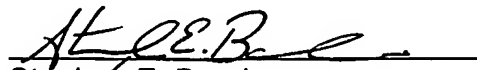
With the present Amendment, applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable over the art of record and that upon submission of the Terminal Disclaimer, the application will be in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience should he have any questions regarding this matter or require any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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